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38th Night ◎ Harusame* Salad

IT'S BEEN RAINING SINCE EARLY IN THE EVENING. A SPRING RAIN THAT YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE AN UMBRELLA FOR, BUT ARE ALSO NOT TOO BADLY OFF WITHOUT. ON DAYS LIKE THIS, CUSTOMERS TEND NOT TO DROP BY.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE MY FIRST CUSTOMERS WILL BE MIHO-CHAN AND HER FRIEND.

T/N: HARUSAME, LITERALLY MEANING "SPRING RAIN", REFERS TO GLASS NOODLES. THOSE MADE IN JAPAN ARE TYPICALLY MADE FROM POTATO OR SWEET POTATO STARCH.

YOU SEE, AT THIS SHOP, YOU CAN REQUEST FOR FOOD THAT'S NOT ON THE MENU AND YOU'LL GENERALLY BE ACCOMMODATED, SO GO AHEAD AND ASK FOR WHATEVER YOU LIKE.

Tonjiru Teishoku		600 Yen
Beer	(633ml)	600 Yen
Sake	(360ml)	500 Yen
Shochu	(120ml)	400 Yen

Alcoholic drinks are limited to 3 servings per customer.

OH, DEAR. THAT WAS A SHOCK, THOUGH. TO THINK THAT YAMA-CHAN'S AGED THAT BADLY... I HAD A CRUSH ON HIM LONG AGO, TOO.

AHA...

MASTER, COLD SAKE* FOR TWO TO START WITH.

AH, IS THAT RIGHT?

HE'S ONLY JUST RECOVERED RECENTLY.

YAMA-CHAN'S GONE THROUGH SOME TOUGH TIMES, YOU KNOW? HIS COMPANY WENT BUST, THEN HE GOT DIVORCED, AND THEN HIS HEALTH TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE...

HERE YOU ARE, COLD *SAKE* FOR TWO.

T/N: LITERALLY "HIYA", MEANING "COLD". IN REALITY, IT MEANS UNHEATED/ROOM TEMPERATURE (SPECIFICALLY ~15-30°C). BEARING IN MIND A HISTORICAL LACK OF REFRIGERATION, IT'S "COLD" IN THE SENSE THAT IT'S COOLER THAN BODY TEMPERATURE. NOT "CHILLED" IN A FRIDGE.

SO ANYWAY, ON THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY, WE'RE GOING TO BE DIGGING UP THE TIME CAPSULE THAT WE BURIED WHEN WE GRADUATED. AFTER THAT, WE'VE GOT OUR 30-YEAR CLASS REUNION.

OH, I SEE.

MASTER, MEET SAYURI, A FRIEND FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. SHE'S NOW A TEACHER AT OUR ALMA MATER.

HELLO.

WHO CARES? WE JUST CAME FROM A REUNION COMMITTEE MEETING.

OH, COME ON. WHY DON'T YOU JUST SHOUT OUT OUR AGE?

30-YEAR!?

HARUSAME SALAD.

WHAT ARE YOU HAVING, SAYURI?

THAT'S BECAUSE WE'RE STILL SINGLE.

THE TWO OF YOU SURE ARE YOUTHFUL, THOUGH. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN YOUR FORTIES AT ALL.

SO COMING IN WET FROM SPRING RAIN HAS WHETTED YOUR APPETITE FOR A SPRING RAIN SALAD, EH?

HARUSAME SALAD REMINDS ME OF SHIGACCHI. DIDN'T HE EVEN EAT OTHER PEOPLE'S SHARE OF IT DURING SCHOOL LUNCHES?

?

AH, I REMEMBER NOW!

THAT'S BECAUSE HE'S THE ONE I LIKED SECOND BEST AFTER YAMA-CHAN.

MIHO, YOU DO REMEMBER THE STRANGEST THINGS.

ERM...

SO, WHO DID YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON, SAYURI?

WHAAAT? SO THAT'S HOW IT WAS!! SHIGACCHI WAS VERY SWEET, AFTER ALL.

...SHIGACCHI.

BUT SINCE SHIGACCHI LIKED IT, I THOUGHT I'D TRY TO LIKE IT TOO. I ATE IT EVERY DAY AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, I'D GROWN TO LIKE IT...

...TO BE HONEST, I ACTUALLY USED TO HATE HARUSAME SALAD.

...

...YEAH.

IT'LL BE NICE IF SHIGACCHI COMES, WON'T IT?

A GENTLE RAIN WAS ALSO FALLING ON THE DAY THAT THE TIME CAPSULE WAS DUG UP.

HELLO. MY NAME'S SHIGA.

THIS IS THE FABLED SHIGACCHI! BETTER MAKE IT A LARGE SERVING OF HARUSAME SALAD.

A FEW DAYS LATER...

EH!? POOR THING...

SAYURI'S BEEN ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL WITH APPENDICITIS.

I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU. AND WHERE'S YOUR FRIEND TODAY?

AHA.

THAT'S WHY WE VISITED HER TODAY AND BROUGHT ALONG THE LETTER AND MUSIC BOX SHE'D PLACED IN THE TIME CAPSULE.

SO ANYWAY, WHAT DID YOU WRITE IN YOUR LETTER? LET ME HAVE A LOOK.

THANK YOU.

AW, YOU SPOILSPORT. WE EVEN BROUGHT IT ALL THE WAY HERE FOR YOU, DIDN'T WE?

NO WAY... I'LL READ IT IN SECRET LATER.

SHE'S A DEAR, ISN'T SHE? INNOCENT GIRLS JUST DON'T CHANGE.

KOMATSU SAYURI HASN'T CHANGED EVEN A TINY BIT. I WAS SO SURPRISED.

HOWEVER, THIS WORLD OF MEN AND WOMEN ISN'T SUCH THAT THINGS WILL PLAY OUT AS ONE DESIRES...

TWO MONTHS LATER...

THANK YOU.

PLEASE USE THIS.

YOU'RE UTTERLY SOAKED...

SURE. AND BEER, TOO.

SPRING RAIN SALAD AGAIN? ALTHOUGH WHAT'S FALLING NOW IS SUMMER RAIN.

IT'S A SHAME ABOUT HOW YOU MISSED THE TIME CAPSULE.

MIHO-CHAN ALSO BROUGHT ALONG THE FABLED SHIGACCHI AFTER THAT.

YEAH.

Uwaaaah

...SHIGACCHI. HE PROPOSED TO MIHO.

W-WHAT'S WRONG!?

HOW SHIGACCHI HAD TOLD MIHO-CHAN THAT HE HAD ALWAYS LOVED HER...

HOW MIHO-CHAN HAD GONE TO HER ALONE TO APOLOGIZE...

AS THERE WEREN'T ANY OTHER CUSTOMERS AROUND, SAYURI-CHAN, CRYING ALL THE WHILE, TOLD ME THE WHOLE STORY.

THAT THE TUNE ON THE MUSIC BOX THAT ACCOMPANIED THE LETTER WAS CHOPIN'S "PARTING MELODY"*...

HE'D WRITTEN, "I WANT TO MARRY THE PERSON I LOVE AND MAKE HARUSAME SALAD FOR THEM"...

THAT WITHIN THE LETTER PLACED INSIDE THE TIME CAPSULE,

THE RAIN THAT FALLS TONIGHT COULD WELL BE SAYURI'S VERY TEARS.

JUST GO ON AND LET IT ALL OUT.

T/N: THE TRANSLATION OF THE JAPANESE NAME (WAKARE NO KYOKU) FOR CHOPIN'S ÉTUDE OP. 10, NO. 3; ALSO KNOWN BY SUCH NAMES AS "TRISTESSE" (SADNESS), "L'INTIMITÉ" (INTIMACY), AND "FAREWELL (L'ADIEU)".